

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHINESE CUSTOMS.

#### *Extract from the Journal of a Voyage to Canton.*

"At night there was a great display of fireworks on the river, and several large junks were most brilliantly illuminated with a large number of lamps arranged with such taste and fancy as to produce a very fine effect as they passed down the stream. This we were told was a peace offering to the DEVIL. The following evening a party of us went through the HONGS of Kinkqua, Youqua, and Ponkiqua, security merchants, which were splendidly decorated and illuminated with variegated lamps, artificial flowers, and a variety of other ornaments, in honor of the DEVIL, or QUI, as he is called by the Chinese. Europeans and Americans go by the name of FANQUI, or STRANGE DEVIL, to which they not unfrequently add the term of QUIST, that means rogue, rascal, knave, or any thing bad.

"The 'Sunday shines no Sabbath day' in China. To the Chinese all days are alike, and Europeans, as well as our own countrymen, seem to slide into the same custom with a great deal of facility. They transact business on that day just the same as through the week. The first and the few succeeding days of the new year are the only holidays, as far as I can learn, observed by the Chinese. At this time the poorest peasant makes a point of having a new suit of clothes for himself and his family, while they pay visits to their friends and relations, interchange civilities and compliments, and make and receive presents."

It is, I believe, universally admitted by travellers in China, that its inhabitants are a very mild, inoffensive people, and at least as moral, if not more so, than Christian nations; from whence it may be inferred, that it makes little or no difference which is worshipped, God or the devil. In fact, by the description generally given of them, it would be difficult to decide which should have the preference. As represented by theologians, they both excite fear and horror, unaccompanied with respect; and, as the devil is considered the prime minister, or executor of the will of the Almighty in the punishment of mortals, it appears wise in the Chinese to endeavor to gain his good graces. A catholic Spaniard adopted the same policy: being under apprehensions of death, he sent for his father confessor to take the confession of his sins. The priest represented to him the awful tortures with which the devil would afflict him, provided he did not sincerely repent; to which the sick man replied, "I hope my lord, the devil, will not be so cruel;" and, being reproved by the priest for this manner of expression, he thought it safest to treat his honor with civility, as he did not know whose hands he might fall."

With respect to the Chinese, who practise a more pure morality than Christians, it must be attributed to the precepts of their philosophical lawgiver, Confucius, whose system of ethics is decidedly far superior to any that has ever been promulgated, either by inspiration or otherwise.

A. B.

## TO PRIEST "S."

Mr. Editor—If your correspondent S. had ever read Mr. Shultz's "Memoir," or "Biblical Challenge to Bishop Hobart and every Clergy," (*priest S. included, of course,*) which was duly published in the eastern and western newspapers, he would have known that Mr. Shultz is the advocate of a very simple system of religion, called "theism," which consists in the three following items: the unity of god, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments. And this, I will venture to say, is the *private* religion of the greater part of every enlightened nation of Christians, where the influence and persecution of priestcraft have made *hypocrisy* absolutely necessary for their prosperity through life. If there is any resemblance between my writings and "Burgoyne" and the "old lady," as priest S. asserts, then I fancy it will be found owing, altogether, to the ignorance of the priest, as usual.

If your correspondent S. had only read the caption of Mr. Shultz's "Triumph of Truth," S. would have discovered at once that Mr. Shultz's "facts" were not all actual facts, but mostly "*historical facts*," &c.; which, of course, include all the "historical" fables recorded in the various Bibles, or "words of God," as well as elsewhere.

As your correspondent S. has entirely misquoted Mr. Shultz's fact 171, Mr. S. will not lose time in replying to it.

If your correspondent S. will refer to Mr. Shultz's fact 150, or the Shaster, or extracts from it, S. will find that Brahma taught "the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments" about 3,200 years before Christ, or "the comrades or followers of Christ," were born!

If Mr. Shultz has proved that the cosmogony of Moses, like every other, was nothing more than the "guess" work of an ignorant author, then I think that Mr. S. has an equal right to make some "guess" work; leaving it to posterity to decide who makes the most *rational* "guesses."

Now, as the world agree that "atheism" is no religion; and all the Jews and Christians admit that Adam and Eve were the first pair of mortals, and yet neither pagans, Jews, nor Christians; it follows, of course, that they must have been either *theists* or *deists*. And, if Moses is the best authority, then were they deists; and so with all the other patriarchs, including Moses and the Jews, until about 400 years after Moses; for you cannot *prove* that Moses, or any *one* of them, believed in "the immortality of the soul or a future state of rewards and punishments!"

If we admit, as is generally the case, that we are all the offspring of *one pair* of mortals, no matter by what names they are designated in the various "words of God" of the various nations, it will also follow, as a matter of course, that, if they had any knowledge of religion at all, it must of necessity have been either theism or deism. And, if God ever designed to instruct man at all in his religious duties, it would only have been on that great occasion when, after being created in manhood, without that experience which all their posterity would gradually acquire, he may have instructed them in the unity of God, "the immortality of the

soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments;" and thus produced that pure system of theism which prevailed so long in China, and no doubt among the ancient Hindoos, from whom the Chinese are descended.

But, if the first pair were created in infancy, or left entirely to their own reason and experience, without any instructions whatever from their creator, then they would naturally have become good deists; for man is by nature *good*, and do not become wicked until repeated temptations are thrown in their way.

If, therefore, the first pair were created in manhood, as is generally believed, then the whole creation was a necessary miracle: so it became necessary that the first pair should receive a due share of knowledge from their creator, since they were deprived of that great school, education and experience, which all their posterity have enjoyed.

If God ever made any communication to our first parents, it is now impossible to prove what; but of this we may rest assured, that if our souls are *immortal*, then he, no doubt, instructed our first parents in some such brief items of theology as now compose Mr. Shultz's system of theism. Doctrines so universally spread, though corrupted, can only be traced to the *Highest First Cause!*

C. SCHULTZ.

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#### IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

Mr. Editor—I was much gratified, a few days ago, to observe an article in the *New York Enquirer*, from the pen of the editor, in which, greatly to the credit of his feelings as a man, he warmly urges his fellow citizens to extend their benevolence, at this trying season, to those children of misfortune now confined in our debtors' prison.

Imprisonment for debt has increased, of late years, to an awful extent, and is disseminating its baneful and immoral principles through all conditions in society—extinguishing all virtuous, kind, and honorable feelings in the breasts of the unfortunate prisoners—ruining whole families, and creating a heavy charge on the public, without a single benefit arising from this barbarous practice. Do not tradesmen who give credit always put an increased price on the article they sell, equivalent to an insurance for loss? What advantage do they reap from imprisoning their debtors? I contend, none. In fact, do seven out of ten persons arrested ever pay a cent? And does not the creditor prevent his debtor from paying him by the very means he takes of tearing him from his business and family? Is it at all an equitable principle that a tradesman voluntarily giving his customers credit for his own profit, and to extend his own business, should call on the community to support a family, probably of six or eight persons, for his individual benefit? especially after he has deprived them of their principal support.

If the *justice* of these proceedings cannot be admitted, neither can their *policy*. Instead of benefiting himself, the creditor irreparably injures the debtor, his family, and the whole community; for, is it possible to suppose that men thrown in prison, kept from the society of their wives, and in total idleness of body and mind, should not be contaminated by the society they mix with; and, from sober, steady, and industrious ha-

bits, fly to drunkenness, debauchery, and gambling for relief? And when the debtor is liberated, does he not return to his house (if he have one) a careless, ruined being, diseased in mind, and, perhaps, in person—with habits that must inevitably do away with his family's happiness, and make him unmindful and inattentive to their present as well as future comfort. And has not his wife, also, perhaps, been unfortunately drawn astray to find clothing and food for herself and children—thus propagating immorality? Is not the country also injured by having numerous individuals thrown on the public charge, who, if they had not been cut off from society, would, by their industry and exertions, have maintained their families, and, by that means, have greatly increased the trade of the neighborhood in which they were established.

Do not these considerations prove the injustice and impolicy of imprisonment for debt? The system is, indeed, dreadful, and calls loudly on the attention of the legislature. It is a subject that the press (that great engine of public opinion) ought warmly to interest itself in; for what becomes of our boasted freedom, when an individual is liable, without any proof, to be imprisoned for months at the will of an inexorable creditor.

VERITAS.

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THE DEVIL'S FIGHT.

Mr. Editor—Those of your readers who have read Milton's *Paradise Lost* must be familiar with the warlike exploits of the devil *in heaven*, when he assailed the throne of the Eternal, and which led to his Satanic majesty's expulsion from the celestial regions; but few of them, I presume, are aware that the "Old Serpent" has been engaged, *on this earth*, in a combat which terminated more to his satisfaction, to say nothing of the glory he acquired by the achievement. The fight to which I allude took place in Goslar Cathedral, during the reign of Henry IV. It is true, that Honemann, who gives an account of the conflict, is silent as to the devil being one of the combatants; but this might arise from his devilship not choosing to render himself visible to any one but the bishop, on whose side he so bravely fought. The following is the story, as given by Roscoe: it may, perhaps, serve to amuse some of your readers:

"The emperor Henry IV. was greatly attached to his place of nativity, as every good prince ought to be—the forementioned imperial city of Goslar in the Harz. There he was wont to sojourn, and to expend large sums upon its enlargement and embellishment. There, too, he held his royal festivals, and in particular his Christmas revels, which were celebrated with the utmost pomp and pageantry. He never omitted to invite a number of the archbishops and bishops of his territories, in order to reflect still greater splendor upon the scene, while it gave greater authority and unction to its enjoyments.

"In the year 1063 were these princes to be seen here assembled for the purpose of solemnizing the Christmas feast. It was intended to be held in the great cathedral, the same which remains standing at this day. The grandest preparations of all kinds had been going on for many days, and conspicuous seats for the noble guests were raised and decorated for the occasion. At this time, there happened to be mooted a serious ques-



tion of precedence, between the then resident bishop of Hildesheim and the head abbot of Fulda, both spiritual lords invited by the emperor to the feast, and here the spiritual controversy was likely to be renewed. Now, according to immemorial custom, the abbot of Fulda was entitled, in an assembly of prelates, to take his station next to the archbishop of Mentz. The bishop of Hildesheim was of another opinion; for in his diocese there were only three archbishops who could boast a right to take precedence of him. As none of their retinue were willing to waive a tittle of their master's authority, it consequently ensued that from words they soon came to blows, which, had it not been for the piety of archduke Otto of Bavaria, who belonged to the party of Fulda, and exerted himself to mitigate the abbot's rage, by obtaining for him the upper seat, must have been carried to great extremities.

But the embers of discord only slumbered; for on the ensuing feast of Pentecost the question was renewed. The emperor was again at Goslar; the festival was to be kept there in the most magnificent manner, and both these spiritual adversaries were once more summoned to attend. He of Hildesheim was, at this time, determined to wipe off the disgrace which he had suffered from his late defeat, and at all events, come what would, to take his station above him of Fulda. To this end he engaged the margrave Egbert of Saxony, with staunch men at arms, whom he secretly concealed behind the altar, in order to be ready to enforce his claim in time of need, if his enemy would not yield to spiritual exhortation. As the procession of nobles, bishops, and the whole of the royal train, with the emperor at its head, entered the church, the engagement almost immediately began. The old question proceeded from controversy to quarrel; from words to blows: the signal for the bishop's party to leave their ambush was given, and they joined in the affray, and by dint of fists and sticks compelled the men of Fulda to abandon the church. These last, incensed in the highest degree, ran to obtain assistance from the citizens, and, arming themselves, again rushed forward into the cathedral, where they found the service already begun, and even the choral hymn given out by the canons. But it was no time to sing; for the new part of the congregation fell upon the bishop's party, not with fists and cudgels, but with drawn swords. It was then the confusion became terrible: the altar was covered with human sacrifices, and blood flowed down the marble steps over the rank grave grown grass, into the street, and had very nearly drowned the sexton.

"The bishop of Hildesheim had fought his way into the pulpit, whence he encouraged his party to stand firm, and promised to answer and give absolution for all the slaughter, in spite of the holy place where it happened, as the confessor and shepherd of his flock. Those of Hildesheim, hearing this indulgence, fought like lions; and the poor emperor in vain tried to assert his authority. Command and entreaty were alike despised; his devotion and his power equally set at defiance. None troubled their heads about him: the bishop had granted absolution to the combatants; and he was happy to make his escape with a whole skin into his palace. The bishop's church militants carried the day. They drove the men of Fulda once more out of the church, and shut the doors.

"But who stood by them in the fray? It was loudly asserted, as the tradition goes, that the devil himself inspired the bishop, and was present at the scene. And more, he laid bravely about him, and, when the victory was won, rose upon his wings, and disappearing through an aperture in the church ceiling, called aloud to the citizens of Goslar, high in air, as he laughed with delight,

"*Hunc diem bellicosum feci!*"

"The hole through which he disappeared no mason has till latterly been found able to repair. The lime and stone invariably fall off again, and it thus remained open during many centuries; for it was all to no purpose to attempt to stop it. At length, however, duke Antony Ubrich of Brunswick, desirous to do away with the recollection of so scandalous an occurrence, adopted the expedient of applying a Bible to the aperture in place of a stone, and by such means it has remained entire to the present day."

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#### THANKSGIVING.

Mr. Editor—The manly and philanthropic sentiments contained in the proclamation of governor E. Lincoln, recommending the 29th day of November ult. to be observed as a day of thanksgiving in the state of Maine, appear to me to be worthy of notice, as such sentiments are unusual in documents of this kind. On inquiry, I find that Mr. Lincoln is a unitarian, which accounts for this anomaly. I have always observed, that when the mind becomes even partially freed from the trammels of superstition, particularly from the dogmas of election and reprobation, the pure, unsophisticated principles of Nature resume their proper station. Humanity becomes the polar star, the *primum mobile* of action. This remark is fully evinced in the present instance. The orthodox clergy of the state of Maine, it is said, are much enraged at this proclamation, and in consequence actually refused their usual prayers at a militia parade at which the governor attended. But I have not heard of any untoward accident happening for want of their canting, hypocritical services. The following is an extract from the concluding paragraph of the proclamation.

A. B.

"I recommend to the citizens of this state to worship God by liberality of sentiment and by open handed beneficence—by instructing the ignorant, guiding the erring, and relieving the unfortunate—by aiding the poor and sick, going and doing good as the good Samaritan did," (who by the way was no Christian,) "and teaching and practising the duty of kindness."

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*Reflections of a Tourist on his return from Europe.*—"I always found most corruption in extreme wealth and extreme poverty. I found in all nations religion, muffled up in superstition, abused to the injury of society, and converted by open force or hypocrisy into an instrument of deception, ambition, avarice, voluptuousness, or indolence. I found individuals and nations made worse by religion without morals."

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**NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1827.**


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## LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible. By the Secretary.

## LECTURE NINTH.

*Continued from page 281.*

A Mahometan writer, whose work contains several particulars of the Egyptian history, narrates the following tradition of the Arabians:—"When Noah first entered the ark by God's command, he let out the raven to bring intelligence of the decrease of the waters. The raven never returned, but preyed on the carrions of the dead; on which Noah pronounced imprecations against her, that she might never be a domestic bird, but live like a vagabond, and feed on carcases. After this he let out the dove. She soon returned with her feet stained by the slime of the earth, which the sun had now heated: and her feet have continued red from that time. Noah then prayed to God to preserve her swiftness, and that she might become a domestic bird, and beloved of men. He likewise prayed, that she might have patience to bear the loss of her young; and he gave her his benediction. Those who were in the ark with Noah having pressed him to have it cleansed, he gave the elephant a slap under the ear; on which this animal sneezed out a hog, which immediately set about the work of cleansing. The rats growing very numerous and troublesome, Noah gave the lion a blow under the ear, when the monarch of the forest sneezed out a cat to destroy these vermin."

The *Ark*, said to have been framed as directed by divine wisdom, for the preservation of Noah, was no other than the *sacred ship* in the Chaldaic and Egyptian spheres; and which the Greeks afterwards called *Argo*, the ship of *Osiris*. The Argonautic expedition has been always esteemed authentic, and admitted as a chronological æra. The golden fleece at Eolchis was to be recovered. A ship was built at Pagasa, the first that was ever attempted. It was built by Argus, instructed by the goddess Minerva. This ship (constructed with sacred timber from Dodona) was said to have been oracular. A select band of heroes, with Jason at their head, engage in the enterprize. Chironor, as some say, Musæus, made a sphere (the first ever made) for their use. They set sail at the rising of the Pleiades; but authors differ as to their route, both in setting out and returning. At the Bosphorus were two rocks, which used to clash together, and intercept whatever was passing. They let fly a dove; which, getting through, they followed, and, by the help of Minerva, escaped. After many difficulties, they succeed, and Jason brings off the prize, and Medea, the daughter of king Æetes; who, enraged, fits out some ships, pursues them, cuts off their retreat, and compels them to return another way. At length they arrive in Greece, sacrifice to the gods, and consecrate the ship to Neptune.

Although this story carries with it the air of romance, and is replete with contradictions and absurdities, yet it has been admitted as a his-

torical fact by Herodius, Diodorus, and Strabo, among the ancients; with every Grecian mythologist; by Clemens, Eusebius, and Syncellus, among the Christian fathers; and among the moderns, by Scaliger, Petavius, archbishop Usher, Dr. Jackson; and though last, not least in our estimation, by sir Isaac Newton! From this we may see what errors have arisen from ignorance and prejudice—errors that have given birth to the numerous *mystic* characters, whose lives of wonder have swelled the volumes, and obscured the pages of history. “The mystic offspring of error, observes Mackay, are the figerative children of falsehood, whose miraculous recitals have instilled into the mind of man that poison which has been productive of his greatest woe—the only antidote to which must flow from the throne of truth, when he shall allow himself to be guided by reason, for it is that alone which distinguishes the man from the brute.”

It is evident that the story of the Argonautics, as well as that of Noah, was taken from the mythology and rites of the Egyptians, and, by length of time, both of them became obscure in consequence of being transmitted in hieroglyphical representations. In the account of the *Argo* or the *Ark* is figured the preserving from the annual inundations the people of that country; and, as both the Greeks and the Jews had frequent intercourse with the Egyptians, the recollection of these allegories and emblems were preserved, and afterwards converted into real histories as suited the particular views of the writers of these nations.

In other countries besides Egypt, an ark or ship was introduced into their mysteries, and often carried about in their festivals. In its side was a door, by which the entrance to death and darkness was signified, and the exit as a return to life. Hence the opening and shutting of it were religiously observed. In the ark said to have been constructed by Noah, there was also a door in its side for ingress and egress. Lucian informs us that Deucalion perceived the water by which the earth was deluged sink into an aperture in the earth and disappear: he built altars, and raised a temple to Juno over the aperture, as a monument of the destruction which happened, and of his own deliverance. In like manner, the Bible informs us that when the deluge was over, and the water had subsided, Noah raised an altar unto the Lord and offered sacrifices. It is believed even at this day, that the remains of the ark, of which Berosus wrote so many ages ago, are still to be seen on Mount Macis, the name given to Mount Ararat by the Armenians. Chardin, who tells this story, also mentions a monk named James, who, “prepossessed with the opinion of this hill being assuredly that on which the ark rested after the deluge, formed the design of going to its top, or of dying in the attempt. He got half way up, but never could mount higher; for, after climbing all the day he was miraculously carried back, in his sleep at night, to the spot whence he had set out in the morning. This continued for a considerable time; when at length God listened to the monk’s prayers, and agreed to satisfy his desire in part. For this object he sent to James by an angel a piece of the ark; exhorting him through the same messenger not to fatigue himself in climbing the mountain, as God had forbidden its access to mankind.” The fact is, Ararat is one of the highest mountains on the globe. Half way from the top, it is covered



with everlasting snow, and those who have wished to climb it have been arrested by the excessive cold before they had performed half the distance. Thus the nations, without a miracle, are foiled in their attempts to reach the summit in order to search for the remains of the ark.

There can be no doubt that many parts of our globe were at one time or other submersed in water, or powerfully acted upon by some natural convulsion. How often have the bounds set by Nature or by art been broken through by irruptions of the ocean, by immoderate rains, or by subterraneous waters. From these causes, whole islands have been swallowed up; large tracts of continent drowned; mountains changed into whirlpools, and from land into sea. Cities with their inhabitants, as well as cultivated fields and woods, with the beasts belonging to them, have perished by these natural irruptions, which are peculiar to no country nor confined to any period. But to infer from these partial and local devastations, the natural consequence of fixed and established laws, that this globe was, at one period, entirely covered with water, is to infer a physical impossibility. The beds of shells and other marine strata every where found at a great distance from the ocean, clearly demonstrate that they were deposited at a period when the places where they lie formed the bed or shores of the sea. But that this deposition was affected at once by a universal deluge, is contradicted by the laws of gravitation as well as those of fluids. Dr. Burnet, who examined this subject with more attention and impartiality than any other Christian divine or Bible expounder, admits, that, after the closest and most exact calculations as to the *quantity* of water it would take to cover the tops of the highest mountains, he had ascertained "it must at least exceed the magnitude of *eight oceans*." He farther admits "so great a quantity of waters can nowhere be found, though we exhaust all the treasures of water either in heaven or earth, and add, besides, the subterranean water;" and that "howsoever, or from what place soever this prodigious mass of waters was brought upon the earth, there could be no means of removing them; or any possible method found out of taking away such a mighty heap of water." From these premises this learned and celebrated author rationally concluded, "that our present earth is not subject to a deluge; nor is it capable of it by its shape or elevation." (*Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*, c. 4. p. 40.)

Father Mersenna, also a celebrated philosopher, has likewise proved from exact observation that the most violent storms produce no more than an inch and a half of water in depth in the space of half an hour, which amounts to only six feet in a day. Now the rain which caused the deluge lasted but forty days. Admitting the highest mountain an elevation of only two miles, which is one third less than their height, it must follow, that to reach their tops, instead of surmounting them, there must have fallen from the sky in twenty-four hours 125 feet of water, instead of six produced in the greatest storms—a fall which exceeds possibility, and the power of Nature.

*To be continued.*

### MISCELLANEOUS.

*Priestly Barbarities.*—During my stay in Spain and Portugal, from the year 1812 to 1814, I have often, says a traveller, been an ocular witness of the depravity of friars, whom I have seen, late at night, revelling in public houses amidst courtesans and other infamous characters; and in the conversation of drunkenness have heard them indulge in the most blasphemous expressions. One evening, on returning from the opera at Lisbon, I went into a well known public house, where I met the guardian of capuchins, brandishing a tremendous stiletto, and compelling every body present to drink the health of his mistress, whose accomplishments he extolled in the most revolting language. It is a common practice, both in Lisbon and Oporto, that while a reverend friar is paying his addresses to a married woman in her own bed room, the husband, who perceives his sandals left at the door, does not attempt to intrude upon the hermit's happiness, but respects those mute sentinels as the messengers of their master's commands. One evening, in Cadiz, having, according to appointment, called on a lady, I soon perceived by her embarrassment, that she was laboring under some fear which she wished to conceal from me; when, having eagerly pressed her to decypher the mystery, I on a sudden saw issuing from a remote corner of the room a stout half dressed friar, who in a thundering voice commanded me to leave the house. I did not lose my self possession, but, having cocked my pistol, soon tamed the reverend into submission. We became immediately good friends, and during my stay in Cadiz he was the most zealous and active promoter of my pleasures. In Naples, and in Rome herself, the best and most efficient interposers in love intrigues are friars, who, under the pretext of presenting fruits and flowers to gentlemen travellers, contrive to introduce themselves at the several hotels, and thus commence with them an immoral but profitable intercourse.

The two following atrocious specimens of the debauched habits of friars, blended with the most unexampled cruelty, happened in the kingdom of Naples in the year 1807; and, as I was eye witness, both at the trial and the execution of the reverend malefactors, I can speak with perfect confidence of being believed. The first took place at Garigliano, a few miles from Naples. A very young and handsome girl, the daughter of the principal innkeeper of that village, was in the constant habit of going every evening, towards dusk, to the church of the Franciscans, in order to partake of the usual holy prayers. On one of those evenings she was missed by her anxious parents, who, in conjunction with her intended husband, searched every place and made every inquiry in order to regain the object of their affections. Several weeks passed away without gaining the least clue to this most distressing mystery, until, with the exception of the desolate lover, every individual of her family had given her entirely up. This affectionate young man, who, since the fatal loss of his beloved friend, had become an assiduous visitor at that same church, happened one evening, both from lassitude and sorrow, to fall asleep in one of the confessional pews, where he remained unperceived, and was thus shut up in the church. In the middle of the night he was

on a sudden awoke by the appearance of several friars, with torches in their hands, dragging after them a woman quite naked, whom he soon recognized for the dear object of his love. Unable to rescue her from the grasp of these armed assassins, and fearful of sharing the same fate which he perceived was pending upon her, he had the stoicism to remain a quiet spectator to that atrocious tragedy. The poor girl, amid her desolating cries, and the blasphemous yells of those holy monsters, was dragged to the brink of an open vault, where in spite of her heart piercing entreaties, she was inhumanly stabbed and precipitated into it. The terrified lover immediately on the morning gave information to the police, who caused the convent to be surrounded by soldiers, the culprits secured, their crime proved, and their punishment executed. The second case, no less horrible in all its features, happened in the city of Naples. A Franciscan friar, who for many years had kept company with a woman, by whom he had three children, formed a fresh connection with another female, who, with her religious paramour, plotted the destruction of her rival. One morning the friar prevailed upon his former artless victim to spend with him a day in the country, and take all her children with her. The unsuspecting female readily acquiesced in the reverend monster's wishes, and took along with her only two children, the eldest having gone to school. As soon as this little company had reached a thick forest, a few miles from the city, the infuriated friar despatched both the mother and the children; and, wishing to complete the destruction of the whole family, went in search of the eldest girl, whom, under pretext that her mother wanted to see her, he took away with him, and made her share the same horrible fate. This atrocious murder remained concealed for a few days only; when king Joseph, hunting in that same forest, came to the spot where the mother and her innocent children had been butchered, and perceived some of their limbs hanging from the trees: in this manner the whole mysterious transaction was revealed, and the many circumstances were brought to light. The two culprits were executed, and the reverend was not even allowed the privilege of taking off the dress of his own order.

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*Divination.*—There always has been, and ever will be, a strong disposition in human nature to inquire into that which has been wisely concealed from their knowledge,—the events of futurity. This propensity was formerly extremely prevalent, and was not then, as now, wholly confined to the lower orders of society; so far from it, indeed, that there were few nobles or ladies of the court, even to majesty itself, who disdained to consult an astrologer, or “cunning man.” The Jews, taking advantage of this disposition for oracular intelligence, when the spirit of prophecy ceased among them, pretended to a new kind of revelation, which they called Bath-col, that is, “the daughter of a voice,” because it succeeded the oracular voice delivered from the mercy seat, when they consulted God by Urim and Thummim. They pretended that it was a voice from heaven, and some say it was attended with a loud clap of thunder. We have several instances of this oracle in the Talmud: one will be sufficient, and serve as a specimen. “Rabbi Jochanan and rabbi Simeon Ben Lachhis, wishing to see their friend the rabbi Samuel,



a doctor of Babylon, said, 'Let us follow the hearing of Bath-col.' Accordingly, travelling near a school, they heard a boy reading these words from the first book of Samuel, 'And Samuel died.' Whence they inferred that their friend was dead, which was as they afterwards discovered, correct." The Bath-col of the Jews was not unlike the *Sortes virgilianæ*, of the heathens, differing merely in this particular, that in the former, the first words they happened to meet with upon opening a book of their poetry was a kind of oracle, whereby they predicted future events; and in the latter, when they appealed to Bath-col, the first words they heard from any one's mouth were considered as a voice from heaven, directing them in their inquiries.

The Christians were far from being entirely free from this superstition; they frequently used the scriptures in a way similar to that in which the pagans did the works of Virgil. It was practised by Herodius, emperor of the east, in the beginning of the seventh century; for, being at war with Cotives, king of Persia, and in doubt, after a successful campaign, where to take up his winter quarters, he consulted the scriptures in the above mentioned manner, and was by that determined. It was the practice in France during several ages to use this kind of divination at the consecration of a bishop, in order to discover his life, manners, and future behavior. It was the Normans, however, who introduced this custom into England; and we are informed by the chronicles of the times, that at the consecration of William, the second Norman bishop of Norwich, the words which first occurred on opening the Bible were, "not this man, but Barabbas." Shortly after which William died, and was succeeded by Herbert de Lozinga, a man well known for his rapacious and avaricious disposition, ready to do any thing for gain. At the consecration of this Herbert de Lozinga, the words which first presented themselves were those addressed by Christ to the traitor Judas, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" This circumstance, adds the chronicle, so affected Herbert, that he thoroughly repented his crimes, the principle of which had been simony under William Rufus, and in expiation of them founded the cathedral church of Norwich, the first stone of which he laid in the year 1096. This superstition, is far from being yet wholly extinct, while the desire of penetrating into the gloom of futurity will never be entirely eradicated from the human breast, although education, knowledge, and the press have, at the present time, considerably diminished its domain.

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*Armenian Cathedral.*—Chardin writes of this place, in 1673, that "It is, as it were, the holy of holies with Armenian Christians, the spot for which they have the highest veneration. They call it Ecsmiazin; that is to say, *the descent of the only begotten son, or the only begotten son descended.* The monks show in their sacristy at this place many very splendid vestments, crosses, and chalices of gold, silver lamps, and silver chandeliers of an extraordinary size. The greater part of these riches proceed from papal munificence, and bear as ample testimony to Romish credulity as to the trickery of the Armenian church. Amid the treasure may be seen, also, many shrines of silver, and of silver gilt. The principal relics here are, according to the guardian monks, the upper part of



the body of St. Repsima, an arm and a thigh of St. Caiava, an arm of St. Gregory, surnamed the *Illuminator*, upon account of his having converted the Armenians; a rib of St. James, bishop of Jerusalem, a finger of St. Peter, and two fingers of John the Baptist. The monks of the place affirm, that the body of this saint rests within the conventional church of their order, near Arzeroom; that Leontius, bishop of Cæsarea, gave it to their first patriarch; and that, after having been for three hundred and fifty years at Eitch-mai-adzen, it was transported to its present abode. These monks, who are the chief doctors of the Armenian church, are ignorant of the histories which relate that the body of John the Baptist was burnt to ashes by command of Julian the apostate. The people of the convent assert that they did for a long time possess two of the nails with which the sacred hands of Jesus Christ were fixed to the cross; but that of these one is now preserved in Diarbekir, and the other in Georgia: furthermore, Abbas the Great pillaged their treasures of the veritable spear, and of the coat without seam, with which he enriched that of the kings of Persia at Ispahan. The Armenians maintain, as an article of their faith, that that is the identical spot where their apostle Gregory saw Jesus Christ one Sunday evening, while at prayers, when he spoke to the saint. They aver, that Jesus Christ drew around St. Gregory, with a ray of light, the plan of this church, and ordered the saint to build it according to that figure. They add, that at this same time did the earth open, upon the spot where the stone now stands; that our Lord cast into the abyss all the devils that were in the Armenian temples, where they delivered oracles; and that then St. Gregory covered the hole with a marble.

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*Religious Pantomimes.*—On one of the hills near Naples there is situate a village, whose rustic habitations are overshadowed by lofty pines, green laurels, and the fragrant orangeries of the neighboring villas, in the arrangement of which Nature has been more consulted than art. There the votaries of ancient usages may enjoy the satisfaction of imagining themselves in the very bosom of the middle age—of those blessed days into which some of the musty brains of our own times would fain reconduct their restive contemporaries. At the festivity of Easter, an immense statue of St. John the baptist issues from the parish church of Arenella, for such is the name of the village, borne on the shoulders of four lusty peasants, who every year dispute the honor of being crushed beneath its ponderous load. The figure moves along at a slow pace, and gives one the idea of a person who has lost something. It turns restlessly about from the right to the left; it goes prying into every door, and finds its way into every court yard and down every street. It was thus, perhaps, that, in the Eleusinian mysteries, Ceres went about in search of her daughter Prosepine who had disappeared from her eyes, amid the yellow plains of Sicily. After many fruitless researches, it seems, if it be not very much mistaken, to hear at a distance the festive hymns that announce the resurrection of the Saviour. It would fain hasten in that direction, and make some advance to meet him, but Mary Magdalen, who has followed him at some short distance, comes to remind him of the promise he has made to the virgin not to monopolize

the first embraces of her son. St. John bows to this request, and politely falls back, to yield to the virgin the happiness of so propitious a greeting. But the heart of a mother has anticipated his coming. Behold she advances with majestic pace, amid the loud congratulations of the people, who advise her to lay aside the black mantle in which she is wrapt. In effect, at the appearance of the redeemer, no longer habited as a man of sorrows, but resplendent in gold and jewels, the holy virgin shows herself to the longing eyes of the spectators, at the same moment peopling the air with a number of birds which escape from her bosom. The people dance around the sacred group, which re-enters the church amid the ringing of bells and the firing of small mortars.

But a still better pantomime, of the sacred kind, is that represented on holy Thursday, at Soccive, a small village in the distric of Aversa. A strapping bellman, arrayed like the man of Nazareth, crowned with thorns and bearing on his shoulders a ponderous cross, sets out to ascend the hill of Calvary. His escort consists of twenty or thirty fellows dressed as Roman soldiers, with helmets and cuirasses. From time to time the sacred victim makes a feint to fall under the load of the cross, and the executioners that follow drive him along, like very Jews, by blows of their lances, by kicks and cuffs, applied in such good earnest that the poor fellow remains most soundly pummelled, and his only consolation is that such harsh treatment will be turned to good account by being accepted, in the other world, in expiation of his sins. Meanwhile the Virgin and the Magdalen, bathed in tears, follow the redeemer; who, after traversing the principal paths about the village, returns, accompanied by the whole population, who are highly edified, and melted to compassion at the affecting spectacle. This sacred masquerade generally terminates with a reconciliation of the Jews and the man of Nazareth, who, without laying aside their costumes, repair to a neighbouring tavern to solace the fatigues and sufferings of the day.

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*Origin of Tithes in England.*—When Ethelwolfe, the Dane, reigned king of England, A. D. 852, he procured Swithin, a monk who had the care of his education, to be chosen bishop of Winchester. This bishop prevailed on Ethelwolfe to enact a law which gave one tenth of the land to the church, on condition that prayers should be said for the soul of the king every Wednesday in all the churches forever. This was the origin of tithes; and the grant was solemnized by a pilgrimage to Rome, where the charter was laid on the great altar of St. Peter, and confirmed by the pope. The monkish historians record a vast multitude of miracles performed by St. Swithin, who was canonized the same year of his death, which happened A. D. 865. He directed his remains to be interred in the churchyard rather than under the chancel of the minister. But the monks, on his being canonized, thought it impious to let the saint rest in a grave in the open air, and appointed the 15th of July to remove the body into the choir. "It rained so violently on that and the succeeding days," that they set aside their design as heretical and blasphemous, and erected a chapel over his tomb, where innumerable miracles were wrought. From this the monkish superstition arose, that if it rains on the 15th of July, or St. Swithin's day, it will rain forty days more.

*The Learned Horse.*—In the reign of queen Elizabeth, a man named Bankes got a great deal of money by showing about his horse; which, sir Kenelm Digby says, in the thirty-seventh chapter of his Treatise "Of Bodies," "would restore a glove to the due owner, after his master had whispered that man's name in his ear," and "would tell the just number of pence in any piece of silver coyn, barely showed him by his master." When the attractions of this extraordinary steed began somewhat to subside, Bankes took it to France; there the priests stirred up the populace to tear him and his horse to pieces, as wizards. Bankes shamed them of their rash conclusions, and proved to the contrary, by making his horse bow at the sign of the cross, which it was thought a wizard was prevented from doing by his infernal contract with his Satanic majesty. He then proceeded to Rome, but there both he and his steed were actually burnt, on the exploded supposition of magic.

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TO OUR PATRONS.

As the second volume, which will complete the first year of the *Correspondent*, is drawing to a close, we think it necessary to call the attention of our subscribers to the conditions on which we commenced the publication, namely: that those residing in the country should pay one year (\$3) *in advance*, besides postage; and those residing in town, six months *in advance*. These terms, we regret to say, have, in several instances, not been complied with as to the current year, which renders it necessary that we should *discontinue* sending the paper, not only to those who are now in arrear, but to those who may not in future conform to the original conditions.

We should hope that no one has subscribed to the *Correspondent* but such as wished to give it *vital* support; and, as we have neither ecclesiastical treasures nor benefices on which to draw, we trust that every well wisher to the cause will be prompt in affording us that aid which is so essential to the permanency of the establishment. Our own personal labors have as yet been gratuitous; but, judging from the great interest felt for our success, and relying on the exertions of the friends of liberal principles to extend the circulation of the *Correspondent*, we have no doubt that we shall be ultimately remunerated. Meanwhile, if *city* subscribers were to pay their subscriptions for one year *at our office*, it would save the expense of collecting, materially promote the prosperity of the concern, and greatly facilitate our labors.

We have a variety of interesting pieces on file, with which we intend to commence our third volume; among which are, "the important Examination of the Scriptures, by Lord Bolingbroke," (originally written in French;) "the Doubts of the Infidels;" "the God of the Jews, or Jehovah Unveiled;" "Watson Refuted," by the author of "the Origin of Christianity, or Truth drawn from Fables;" "the Life of David," &c. And should our encouragement be equal to what we think we are warranted to anticipate, it is our intention to print the *Correspondent* on a finer paper than that on which it is now issued. We have had such ample proofs of good feeling on the part of those with whom we are associated



in the great cause of mental emancipation, that we cannot allow ourselves to doubt of their determination to do every thing that is just and necessary to promote an object of such vital importance.

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*Almanac.*---The Editor of the *Correspondent* is now preparing for the press an *Almanac* modelled on rational principles, and entirely divested of those puerilities and absurdities which characterize every work of that description now in circulation. It will contain all useful and necessary calculations, and such other matters as may have a tendency to enlarge, not to paralyze, the human mind. The retail price will be 6 1-4 cents; but to those who take 25 copies for distribution, a discount of 25 per cent. will be given. Such as are disposed to encourage this undertaking are requested to give notice as soon as possible of the number of copies they may require, as it is intended to put this work to press early in December. Any communication calculated to render this *Almanac* useful or interesting, may be left at No. 15 Chamber street, near the Apprentices' Library.

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*Free Press Association.*---The members of this Association are reminded, that the regular monthly meeting takes place, in the Temple of Arts, William street, tomorrow, the 2d of December, at 10 o'clock forenoon. As business of importance will come before the meeting, a full attendance is requested.

\*\*\* Arrangements are now making to introduce a regular course of scientific lectures (in connection with the theological lectures) at the meetings of the Association. Due notice will be given when the first of these lectures will be delivered.

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Books for sale at the office of the *Correspondent*:

*Ecce Homo!* or a Critical Inquiry into the History of the Life of Jesus of Nazareth—75 cents in boards.

*Paine's Theological Works, complete*, 8vo., bound and gilt—\$2; bds. \$1.50.

*Paine's Age of Reason*, parts I. and II., a new pocket edition, bound and gilt—37 1-2 cents. \*\*\* A liberal discount will be given to those who purchase a quantity of the *Age of Reason*.

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*View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in favor of Materialism*—25 cents.

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\*\*\* Orders for books, in every department of literature, punctually attended to.

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